

Short films created by specialist school students now on display at Arts Centre Melbourne



Student Rilee and Music Therapist John Keuneman. Photo by Mark Gambino.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 15 JULY 2025 – Using music soundscapes and shadow puppetry, students from **Nepean School** – a specialist school located in Seaford – have collaborated with professional sound designers, puppeteers and filmmakers to transform their own stories into cinematic short films. Their storytelling is now on public display at **Arts Centre Melbourne’s Smorgon Family Plaza** until **31 August 2025** as part of the creative learning program [Stories in the Wall](#).

For over 11 years the *Stories in the Wall* program has partnered students from Victorian primary schools with professional working artists to guide them through the storytelling process. Developing their stories into original radio plays, through scriptwriting and sound recording workshops. This year’s program, titled *Secret Surprises*, is the first to offer workshops specifically catered to a specialist school. It extends the students’ storytelling into music composition and the visual medium through puppet workshops.

The students – aged from 5 to 18 years old – teamed up with working creatives including composer and sound designer **Di Drew** who facilitated jam sessions with students, puppeteers **Sarah Kriegler** and **Tim Sneddon** from **Lemony S Puppet Theatre** and filmmaker **Zi Gul Sadeqi** who captured and edited the student’s shadow puppet creations.

“We are incredibly proud to publicly showcase the remarkable artistry of Victoria’s students here at Arts Centre Melbourne,” said **Delsa Evotia Tuitea**, **Stories in the Wall Program Manager** at **Arts Centre Melbourne**.

“It is a rare and special opportunity to have your storytelling publicly displayed amongst the stages and collections at Australia’s largest performing arts centre. Through their dedication in the workshops, the students from Nepean School have more than demonstrated they deserve this moment in the spotlight.”

"It was just gorgeous to see the students participating in their own authentic ways," said **Music Therapist at Nepean School Samantha Allen-Craig**, describing the shadow puppet workshop as one of the most accessible arts programs she has experienced.

Located in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, Nepean School creates an innovative, inclusive and supportive learning environment for children and young people with a physical disability and/or complex health impairment.

Lemony S Puppet Theatre's Sarah Kriegler said: *"It was an immense joy to work with the kids and staff of Nepean School to create Stories from the Wall. Shadows are such an accessible art form and even the smallest thing, like adding some cellophane to your wheelchair, can look astoundingly beautiful. Tim, Zia and I had such a good time on this project, and we're thrilled the kids did too!"*

In a testament to the over decade-long impact of *Stories in the Wall*, this was a return to the program for Di Drew, who previously participated in the program as a student composer at the University of Melbourne, graduating from a student sound designer and composer to now a contracted facilitator.

"Stories in the Wall is one of my favourite projects to work on, because we'd all agree that kids just come up with the most amazing stories. Making music with the students at Nepean School was an absolute honour and a joy. I'm really excited for audiences to experience the magic too!" said Drew.

Completely free for participating schools, *Stories in the Wall* is part of Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment to making the performing arts accessible to everyone. This year's program is made possible by the generous support of the **Marian and E.H. Flack Trust** and **Wendy Kozica**.

Stories in the Wall: Secret Surprises is now on display in the Smorgon Family Plaza in a public activation designed by **Mattea Davies**. The Nepean School student's stories are also available to view online at artscentremelbourne.com.au.

Images can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgements

Students of Nepean Specialist School: Jaxon, Rilee, Riley, Aun, Jax, Mya, Shannon, Chung, Zara, Braxton, Liam, Jagger, Zoe, Abbey, Anthony, Sabina, May, Angel and Emma

Staff of Nepean Specialist School: Samantha Allen-Craig, Zoe Ness and John Keuneman

Music Facilitator & Sound Design: Di Drew

Shadow Puppet Facilitators: Sarah Kriegler and Tim Sneddon of Lemony S Puppet Theatre

Videographer: Zia Sadeqi

Set Design: Mattea Davies

Creative Producer: Delsa Tuitea

Associate Producer, Access & Inclusion: Anna Molnar

Marketing: Chait D'cruz

Media: Will Hamilton

Production: Tony Harding, Gene Headley, Joel Zimsak

For more information and interviews, please contact Media and Communications Advisor Will Hamilton on 0466 684 263 or Will.Hamilton@artscentremelbourne.com.au.

Arts Centre Melbourne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

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